

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Fairgrounds Sidewalk & Veterans Park Walking Trail Pre-Construction Public Hearing February 23, 2012 Tribal Office Boardroom

Present: Community Development Team: Brad Bowman, Gerald Warrington, Ken Klemens, Wayne Wilber.

MITW-Administration: Jeremy Weso- MITW-Administrative Manager

Community Members Present: Donna Scubitz-Beauprey, Dawn M. Wilber, Don Waukechon, Craig Corn, Rudy Corn, Angel Reiter, Jared Waupoose, Mary Husby, Gary Frechette, Pet Martin, Mercedes Martin, Chris Anderson, Warren Wilber Jr., Mike Chapman, Crystal Chevalier, Doug Cox, Dave Corn Sr., Bea Wilber, Gina Washinawatok, Rick Warrington, Marvene Rockman, Anthony Waupochick, Sibby Dodge, Dick Dodge Lisa Waukau, Michelle Tucker, Dave Corn Jr.

Introduction: Wayne Wilber, Director of Community Development, thanked everyone for attending the Public Hearing on the Fairgrounds Road & Veterans Park/Walking Trail. He also introduced his staff and informed those in attendance that the meeting was being recorded.

Wayne also said the plans for the Walking/Trail are proposed and can be changed based upon the results of this meeting. Plans can be adjusted to add or eliminate parts of the project or the whole project can be dropped and the funds can be allocated to a different project. All modifications made through public comment portion of this meeting will be referred to the MTL.

The meeting proceeded with Brad Bowman giving an overview on the project and then followed with a public question and answer with the Community Development team members. Everyone who signed in and indicated they wanted to speak was given the opportunity to make their public comment on the project for the record.

Project Overview: Brad Bowman, Project Manager provided a handout of the proposed scope of work for the Fairgrounds Sidewalk & Veterans Park Walking Trail. Topics included:

Fairgrounds Sidewalk
Veteran's Memorial
Parking Lot
Monument

Veteran's Park Walking Trail
Veteran's Sign
Pavilion
Milestones for the Project

Public Comment:

Donna Skubitz-Beauprey: She noted at previous General Councils meeting about the drinking, the drug use and selling (of drugs) that happened at the Fairgrounds cul-de-sac but has (since) dwindled dramatically in the past two years. She is concerned when lights start going up - people will start accessing it and that is going to turn into the same situation that was just rectified. When you open up a right of way, are we inviting individuals that we know nothing about and not from this area to possibly cause harm to

children and other people. She also has concerns about burial grounds and the old “ricing pit” - that area is being used by our community members for sweat lodges, fasting and for ceremonies. The lighting is going to be affecting that because a lot of that is done at night. Since the topic is “coming to a disturbance of this nature and that cultural area”, she feels she has to bring it to attention - her family was passed the information about a medicine bag buried in the area of the proposed sidewalk. That whole area is an archaeological site and there are burial graves in the area. Can’t depend on an archaeologist to be accurate and to know where everything is –they showed Dr. Overstreet burial sites not previously marked and he did agree there were burial sites. As native people, our “oral traditions” are what is accurate and the knowledge that is passed down. She is concerned that people would dig up a medicine bundle or any other arch sites- simply for the reason of progressing as a city. Would progress be sidewalk and lightning? She has very strong feelings about disturbing that and second-guesses what they are doing. She hopes we rely on our culture and states that we are living on the Menominee Reservation and asks what is the need for a sidewalk and lighting going up that way through very traditional cultural and archeological sites?

Dawn M Wilber: Starts out with a question about why do we have to have 20-stall parking lot? Suggest maybe angle parking. Why do we have to have a parking lot in the middle of our beautiful park? She likes Donna’s comments. It is our heritage to be able to be here and to walk on mother earth – what’s wrong with that? Why do we have to walk on sidewalks? There are sidewalks all the way to the casino. There are parts that could be fixed. And why does the sidewalk have to go around a little park? If you are looking for a place for people to walk, why not put a sidewalk on Wolf River Drive inside the loop. You could make the old post office into a pavilion and add a bathroom. There are a lot people in that area that walk around Keshena Falls and go across Highway 55 (which is dangerous). They would utilize a sidewalk if one is put there. She is strongly against the parking lot.

Donnie Waukechon: As far as Conservation goes, the project will be a law enforcement nightmare. We will have non-Indians accessing the river from the sidewalk (even with a sign); we can’t enforce our rules and regulations on non-members. The parking lot will remove kids from using the ballpark. There is a flood plain there. Consider spending the money on other projects because the roads money opens up everything to non-Indians. Conservation will be spending time issuing citations and it will be a nightmare.

Mary Husby: Concerned about a number of features with this project. First, she is concerned about disturbing the burial grounds there and the activity that will be encroaching upon some of the ancestors who lie there. The other areas that fold right into that are taking away some of the privacy that needs to be had for ceremonial activities that are private and available to those who believe in that way. It will be encouraging and cultivating the curious and she would not want to see that infestation and that corruption of some of those ceremonies and some of our ways - and what is being is proposed invites exactly that. The other concerns have to be in terms of the aesthetics and environment of downtown. The words from other who say how beautiful and peaceful it is; How nice (it is) to look at the river that runs thru the very heart of Menominee and to appreciate its cleanliness, its purity and all that it symbolizes to Menominee’s. By putting concrete (and parking lot) there is not a way of enhance that beauty. It needs to be left in its natural state. If there is desire to honor veterans, we are not taking away from their contribution, there could be another way that could be done and leave the environment as it is right now. When this project was thought it would be for Veterans -

that still can be maintained by the flags and having spot lights on the flags and would accomplish that visible recognition that we are giving to veterans everywhere. Putting concrete, walls or parking lot needs to be re-thought. She is also concerned about disturbing the habitat in that area.

Gary Frechette: Is against the project because it is PL-638 money. Like the BIA roads, any project that uses the 638 - opens it up the public. We are opening up downtown to the general public. The sidewalk is not a need, what is needed is the memorial and the tank and this can be done with Tribal funds. Keep it for Tribal people and not the public.

Pet Marin: Agrees with what everyone said here. She is against the project. She lives adjacent to the project there is a lot to be said about young people gathering at the park. Thinks the money can be better spent in some other way. The Keshena Falls area (which is historic to us) should be looked at and cleaned and better maintained. The park itself needs some landscaping but likes it the way it stands. She agrees with the Scubitz sister's comments. Says to "scrap it".

Warren Wilber Jr.: Land of Menominee, it is a beautiful site. Don't want to see it disturbed. People gather there and don't want to see a bench or light in the background. Don't like its BIA funded, it wont take long for word to get out that non-Menominee's can cast (fishing poles) off the sidewalk - don't want it be like Legend Lake - it will ruin the scenery. Gives it a positive -likes what's being proposed for the Veterans (the memorial sign being moved due to flooding). Otherwise he agrees to "scap it".

Dave Corn Jr: Came for the engineering point but after hearing everything he says lets not even disturb the park. Maybe fix up what is there. He sees a safety issue there if we considered putting in angle parking, you will have to back out into the highway and that's not good. How are we going to protect all the concrete from the moving flood plain? Suggests more lighting on Warrington Road - it is one of the darkest roads around and should consider the safety of the kids.

Mercedes Martin: She is against "paving paradise and putting in a parking lot". There is more cement, more construction (with casino improvements) which is a good thing but that increases the importance of preserving that pristine area of downtown. She also agrees with the Scubitz sisters. "Scrap It".

Michael Chapman: Thinks the Road's Group should consider going to public posting route of meetings so that the community knows what is going on. He is against the project. Thinks the environmental assessment was not done accurately. The flooding is an issue and the lighting will be under water every year. There are too many lights (counted 34) and would create visual pollution and is unnecessary. The sidewalk will be right next to a gravesite.

Doug Cox: The park is a really aesthetics place and don't think it should be developed further. The area that really needs attention is the Keshena Falls area. Leave the pristine areas alone and focus on the areas that need improvements. The flooding/ice downtown is very serious and we need to consider not developing that area. Public access is a real concern. Putting a sidewalk along the bank of the river just going to add more conservation problems and could introduce invasive species in our waterways. The EA (for this project) is inadequate and thinks we need to better communicate with BIA - all the things that are necessarily required by law need to be considered (including tribal

regulations, zoning laws and ordinances). He agrees with Mike Chapman on improving the Roads Workgroup communications part.

Dave Corn Sr: What is wrong with the park the way it is? It has been there for 100 years would like to see it there for another 100 years for his grandchildren to enjoy. An ice-dam will wipe out the whole project and who is going to pay for it? Kids play where the parking lot is going to be and now it is going to be taken away. Route 85 has beautiful lights and sidewalks but there are no houses around there - thinks they should fix the sidewalk from downtown to Warrington road and improve the lighting downtown. Agree with others, leave downtown alone!

Bea Wilber: Agrees with most of the people who spoke. The place is so beautiful. She is concerned about the trash. People say the kids don't use the park but they do. Thinks it could be fixed up for the kids.

Gina Washinawatok: As the project developed she has become opposed to the project and agrees with what everyone said so far. Doesn't want Fairgrounds Road lit up. Understands the safety concerns for a sidewalk but the amount the money being spent for 3 events (couple powwows & 4th of July) is hard to weigh. She likes the ideas of the memorials for the veterans. Is opposed to the parking lot and has concerns for the sidewalk due to the flooding.

Tony Waupochick: Is against the project (pavement & concrete). He wants it to remain in its natural state, wants improvements to Veterans memorial.

Dick Dodge: Is against the concrete work that is proposed for the sidewalk and park. Doesn't like the tee-pee on the Land of Menominee sign – would like to see it removed. Has a few inexpensive ways to for the Tribe to improve the park: fill in the potholes, trim the trees, remove stump and monument (or put on new roof/paint). He would like to see more flagpoles (identifying all branches of service) and cut the grass all the way to the river. Doesn't want to see everything scrapped, he would like to see the monument removed and improvement to the flagpoles, but don't forget about everything.

Closing: Wayne Wilber will be putting together a report based upon everyone's comments. The report will go to next Community Development Committee then to MTL. In Wayne's opinion it looks like everyone's opinion is to "scrap" the project and feels they will have to go back to the drawing board and allocate the funding to another project.

Mary Husby asked what the timeline is for the recommendation on this project. Wayne explained the next Community Development Committee Meeting is March 8, 2012. The minutes will be transcribed and we will get it on the agenda for the Community Development Committee meeting.

Jeremy Weso took a non-scientific vote on separate parts of the project that were not officially recorded.

Director's Recommendation:

At this time the recommendation from the Community Development Department is to not pursue the Fairgrounds Road/Veteran's Park Walking Trail based on the public comments from the meeting on February 23, 2012. It is the intent of the department to consider projects the community supports or where evidence supports a recommendation to move forward with a specific project and in this case we find the comments and opposition of the community to the proposed project to be valid. The Community Development Department's recommendation to the Community Development Committee and MTL is based on the lack of support from the community and their comments surrounding the need for further investigations regarding Environmental or Archeological Assessments, Floodplain Construction, Public Access from PL-638 monies or due to the natural aesthetics of the park area. In this case the public's concerns are noted and are the basis for the Community Development's recommendation to allocate these funds to a different project for the upcoming year.